

DEFENCE DIPLOMACY OF ATMANIRBHAR, AGRANI AND ATULYA BHARAT

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Abstract

Defence sector in Bharat has come out of its shell and eager to ensure its participation not only at national level but committed to its presence in the international market. This research paper focuses on the various objectives such as development of indigenous defence production, use of science & technology (S&T), Internet & Communication Technology (ICT) including Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the defence production, PPP based manufacturing competences, strengthen the defence attaché in the Indian embassies globally and utilizing Bhartiya defence export in consolidating peace and security in the world. This paper based on secondary sources primarily uses secondary data analysis, explains qualitative and quantitative data sets and broadly descriptive, explanatory, analyzing the existing data and provide future predictions. The finding explores the potential of defence market in the world and modernize their capacities as per the existing requirements.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Export, Manufacturing, Security, Science & Technology

1. Introduction

India i.e. Bharat has ushered a new tempo in the defence sector under the guise of Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of Bharat since 2014 and registered the outstanding transformation. The defence sector targets for the self-reliant (*Atmanirbhar*), prominent (*Agrani*) and incomparable (*Atulya*) in terms of production for the domestic consumption and look towards as a trader in the global market. As an *Agrani* player in the defence sector, the objective of Bharat will provide the all kinds of weapons in procuring the peace and security among the world community. Bharat *Agraniya* figure in the world community maintains high respect and admiration among world leaders. The *Atulya* defence production of Bharat in the future will remember as a unique defence system in the world.

Bhartiya armed forces performs wonderfully in the world functioning as a part & parcel of United Nations Peace Keeping forces and consists one of the strongest military forces in the world. Bharat ongoing territorial clashes occur time to time need a strong indigenous production of defence paraphernalia. The Operation Sindoor is the right example of the military operation using Swadeshi (indigenous) technology against Pakistan. About 15, 000 KM of having diverse geographical and topographically extensive border of Bharat shares with the neighbourhood countries. Bharat Swadeshi Science & Technology recommends the defence equipment for the national border security covering the Northern State of Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan bordering Pakistan and North Eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh bordering China. Bharat has invited the Bhartiya manufacturing industries for the indigenous production in the defence sector, which will abruptly reduce the import dependency. Bharat's annual budget has marked a substantial rise that reflected the commitment towards defence capabilities. The domestic production of Bharat has made an impressive record high and "aims to achieve ₹3 lakh crore in defence production by 2029" (PIB, 28 July 2025), further establishing itself as a global defence manufacturing hub.

Bharat defence exports has reflected a remarkable increase in the global defence sector. The ease of doing business initiatives in the defence production and Bharat idea of self-reliance reached to more than hundred countries. Out of that, USA, France and Armenia are the top three destination of Bharat defence exports, which reflects the credibility of Bharat partnership. The bulletproof jackets, Dornier (Do-228) aircraft, Chetak helicopters, fast interceptor boats, lightweight torpedoes, boots in the Russian Army's equipment and army vehicles has attracted the foreign defence export portfolios. 'Bharat has secured a ₹3, 800 crore (US\$440.3 million) deal to export

BrahMos missiles to Indonesia, showcasing its advanced defense manufacturing capabilities, including the domestic production of aircraft carriers' (Defence, 2025). Bharat has targeted to export the defence production more than hundred countries so far and export has increased continuously.

2. Atmanirbhar, Agrani and Atulya Bharat

Bharat defence sector has undergone a remarkable transformation since 2014, evolving from a largely import-dependent military force to one increasingly focused on self-reliance and indigenous production. As one of the strongest military powers globally, Bharat holds a pivotal role in ensuring regional security and fulfilling strategic goals. The country's defence budget, which stood at ₹2, 53,346 crore in 2013-14, has seen a significant rise, reaching ₹6, 21,940.85 crore (US\$78.7 billion) in 2024-25, reflecting a clear commitment to strengthening the nation's defence capabilities. Central to this transformation is the growth of Bharat defence manufacturing industry, which has become an integral part of the economy. Through the "Make in Bharat" initiative and policy reforms, the government has actively promoted domestic production and reduced reliance on foreign procurement. This shift has been a key component of Bharat broader vision of achieving Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) in defence, positioning the nation as an emerging hub for the production of advanced military technologies and equipment" (PIB, 28 July 2025).

'Make in Bharat' campaign incorporates the Agraniya public sector in defence production such as Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL), Chennai, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), Bangalore, Defence Offsets Management Wing (DOMW), Delhi, Export Promotion Cell (EPC), Delhi, Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata, Gliders Bharat Limited, Kanpur, Goa Shipyard Limited, Gun and Shell Factory, Cossipore, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bangalore, Hindustan Shipyard Limited, Visakhapatnam, Bharat Optel Limited, Dehradun, Indigenization Division, New Delhi, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai, Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI), Hyderabad, Munitions Bharat Limited (MIL), Pune, Troop Comforts Limited (TCL), Kanpur and Yantra Bharat Limited (YIL), Nagpur. It has also invited the Private sector in defence production such as Bharat Forge, Larsen & Toubro (L&T), Mahindra Defence Systems and Tata Group. "The production of Atulya transport aircraft (Tata), artillery guns (L&T, Tata and Bharat Forge) and Pinaka Rocket Launchers (Tata and L&T) and high-powered radar and close-in-weapon system worth US\$1.6 billion (L&T). Along with it, the DPSUs, DRDO and private companies produce micro, small and medium range of startups in Bharat" (Ministry of Defence, 2023-2024: 45).

Bharat will touch about US\$ 34 billion in defence production by 2029 and establish global defence manufacturing hub. Today, the Atulya defence exports have grown 21 times in the last one-decade and exported to over 100 nations. The target for 2029 is to increase defence exports to US\$ 12.2 billion, underscoring Bharat's ambition to become a reliable global defence partner' (PIB, 28 July 2025). Prime Minister Modi has modernized the Department of Defence Production (DDP) focusing on the production of defence equipment, weapons systems and Platforms including arms and ammunitions, tanks, armoured vehicles, fighter aircraft and helicopters, warships, submarines, missiles, ammunition, electronic equipment, earth moving equipment, special alloys and special purpose steels.

3. Global Defence Diplomacy

Global defence diplomacy has initiated the appointment of Bharat's Defence Attaches to different embassies and missions in the world since 2014. The inauguration of military diplomacy has opened Bharat willingness in participating in the global defence market economy on the one hand and conveyed the message by inviting the public-private-multinational partnership in defence manufacturing and its dissemination in the world on the other hand. Bharat military diplomacy becomes an integrated part of its foreign services that will leverage its intention before the world community in reducing its domestic military dependence on the developed world such as USA and Europe and willingness to propose itself as a seller in the market economy.

The multinational industries in defence willing to work under the transfer of technology on the soil of Bharat with the hi-tech young engineers, which will save their investment expenditure in the production and produce the cheap and best product in the world market. It will cater the need of the developing world countries of Asia, Africa,

South America and Oceanic States in fighting against the international terrorism and establishing peace and security in their region. 'These Attaches will cover Francophone Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Southeastern Africa and Southern Africa. Bhartiya missions in Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Djibouti, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco, Egypt and others will receive the Defence Attaché accordingly. Keeping its Maritime security in mind, Bharat focuses on Indian Ocean, Red Sea, Indo-Pacific and Eurasia' (Kallol Bhattacharjee, 11 April 2024: emphasis mine), to begin with.

Further, Sh. S Jaishankar, Foreign Minister of Bharat has explained that 'four countries in Africa has received the Defence Attaché. Bharat is evolving requirements that stretch from defence production and cooperation, to dealing with crises in Gaza and Ukraine. The more effective management of Attaché in the East African region is crucial for guarding Bhartiya interests in the Red Sea and the Western Indian Ocean. Recently, Bhartiya marine commandos captured 35 Somalian pirates who had hijacked a bulk carrier and taken hostages. The pirates brought to Mumbai in INS Kolkata. The operation took place in the backdrop of continued attacks on western ships by the Houthis rebels of Yemen, which has increased the necessity of maintaining a ready defence posture in and around the Red Sea western Indian Ocean region for safeguarding Bhartiya assets and manpower.

Along with it, Bharat embassy in Poland in the coming months and Czech Republic concurrently serves Bhartiya Defence Attaché. The crisis in Gaza and Ukraine have both highlighted the need for finding a more effective management of Defence Attaché in East Europe and Eurasia' (S Jaishankar, 10 April 2024). The defence attaché of Bharat will join United Kingdom, Russia, Philippines, and Armenia soon as per the requirements. 'The new role of the defence attaché in the embassy of Bharat in Philippines has to be seen in the context of Manila's interest in the Bhartiya military hardware because of its dispute with Beijing over the South China Sea. In January, the Philippines inked a deal worth \$375 million with Brahmos Aerospace Pvt Ltd for the purchase of shore-based anti-ship variant of the Brahmos missile system. Armenia too has emerged as a new destination for Bhartiya military hardware as Yerevan has purchased the PINAKA multi barrel rocket launchers (MBRLs), anti-tank missiles, rockets and anti-drone systems from Bharat. Bharat weapon supplied over Nagorno-Karabakh, and Bharat cold relation with Azerbaijan that has often raised the Kashmir issue in the past' (The Hindu, 10 April 2024).

President Emmanuel Macron of France has visited Bharat in January 2024 and discussed its strategic interest in defence sector. 'The focus on Francophone Africa is a new development and indicates growing alignment between Bharat and French strategic interests and signed on working together in 'third countries'. France has become a major supplier of military hardware for the Bhartiya forces and the relation between the two sides is expected to remain strong because of high level political, military and strategic collaboration' (The Hindu, 10 April 2024: emphasis mine). This joint venture will strengthen the defence production of Bharat in Africa continent and will attract the Europe, USA and South American customers. Recently, the eight public sector and two private defence sector companies of Bharat has participated in the Africa Aerospace and Defence Expo 2024 and fascinated the participants with high quality products such as military fixed wing, naval vessels and surface combatants, missile and missile defence systems, military rotorcraft, submarines, artillery, tactical communications, electronic warfare, military land vehicles, 'advanced light helicopter, combat weapons, tank variants, armoured vehicles, combat vehicles, mine-protected vehicles and tank engines. 'Bhartiya companies assured end-to-end solutions, not just the delivery of the weapons. They give product support, develop industries and collaborate with African countries' (The Economic Times, 19 September 2024).

African defence diplomacy and maritime security in the Indian Ocean has further strengthened in the Joint Defence Committee (JDC) meeting of Bharat and South Africa held in Johannesburg on June 23 & 24, 2025. The bilateral defence industry cooperation and capabilities highlighted the Bharat's defence manufacturing and its interests in exports to African countries will strengthen their relationship. The JDC further explored 'the mutual interest in the Indian Ocean and signed the agreements in the domain of Submarine production, technology transfer and cooperation along with the defence acquisition, production and Research & Development in this sector' (PIB, 25 June 2025). Africa and Bharat Key Maritime Engagement, AIKEYME, means unity in Sanskrit language, aims

to develop common solutions in the maritime security in the Indian Ocean. The AIKEYME maiden initiative of Bhartiya navy from 18-25 April 2025 has synergized the African countries including Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania. 'Bharat's MAHASAGAR initiative envisions mutual and holistic advancement for security and growth across regions, enhance interoperability and discusses anti-piracy operations and information sharing, joint exercises in seamanship and Visit Board Search and Seizure with the participating maritime countries' (Indian Navy, 2025).

4. Defence Sector Action of Bharat

The Atmanirbhar (Self Reliant) action in developing more than four hundred defence products in the country, developed sixty Artificial Intelligence products and become the big initiative under the Department of Military Affairs and Ministry of Defence. Bharat has integrated all the three services such as armed, air and naval with the inter-service commands and institutions, which will unify the demands of hardware and infrastructure collectively. The Aerospace industry, for instance, supports the Research & Development program and launches the indigenous manufacturing infrastructure, which will apply as an integrated action. The space sector has invited the private as well as foreign companies in establishing long term partnership in synergizing defence sector. Cdr Gautam Nanda explains, "As we navigate through a landscape defined by seismic global shifts and ever-evolving security challenges, the need to formulate and execute a comprehensive strategy for the defence sector has never been more pressing.

The vision of '*Atmanirbhar, Agrani and Atulya Bharat 2047*' embodies Bharat ambition to become a foremost power in global defence manufacturing. This vision beckons clear and actionable steps to realize this bold objective where the strategic vectors delineate this vision into concrete goals that collectively pave way for Bharat progression" (Defence Blueprint, 2025). Last year, the government has allocated 'US\$ 2, 74 billion to MSMEs, Start-ups and private industries in collaborating the defence production. The Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC) and Tamil Nadu Defence Corridor (TNDIC) has attracted US\$ 1. 31 billion in these defence industrial corridors for the production and its dissemination at national and global level. This year the Ministry of Defence has targeted the contract about US\$ 57.2 billion for domestic defence industry in the next five years right from 2025 to 2027' (Union Budget, 2025-26: emphasis mine). Both the corridors aims to strengthen indigenous manufacturing competences, which will act as a springboard in all the defence development performance.

This Union Budget of Bharat launches Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), begins Start-ups in the defence sector and associate them to defence partner incubators in developing the new technology and products with the aim of Self-reliance in the defence sector. The Aerospace defence sector on priority receives about US\$50 billion, which covers investment in Air force aircrafts, helicopters, UAVs, avionics and related systems and naval industry receives US\$ 38 billion in building naval vessels, submarines, patrol boats supporting naval forces and investment of US\$ 21 billion in developing missiles, artillery and gun systems (Union Budget, 2025-26: emphasis mine). Bharat invites Foreign Direct Investment in the defence sector with the provision from 74% to 100% under the provision of Transfer of Technology to access the contemporary technologies with the target of 70% Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence production by the year 2027 (Union Budget, 2025-26: emphasis mine) and provided a Green Channel Status Policy.

As a result, the import on defence procurement has reduced in the last three years. The Acing development of Innovative Technologies (ADITI) program focuses on the more and more innovations in the field of critical and strategic defence sector. The SRIJAN, online gateway encourages indigenization and about thirty two thousand items are in the public domain and Raksha Gyan Shakti (RGS) mission (Defence Knowledge Power) has already obtained intellectual property rights of more than fifteen hundred items. DRDO has demonstrated more than four hundred products of strategic and tactical weapon systems including laser guided Anti-Tank Guided Missiles in the Def Expo of 2022 in Gujarat in Bharat. Bharat enhances complete Atmanirbharta in the defence capabilities by the year 2032, stand as a global exporter by 2038 and achieve global leadership in the critical niche technologies by 2045 through its investment in R & D, expanding domestic manufacturing and strengthen innovation. Mr. Gaurav Mehndiratta of KPMG explains, "To position Bharat as a world leader in niche defence technologies by

fostering industry-academia-government collaboration and investing in next-generation R & D, we present this thought leadership offers a forward-looking perspective on shaping the robust defence ecosystem. It delves into the current state, uncovers the critical gaps and proposes well-defined time bound actionable-paving a path toward achieving our vision of Viksit Bharat by the year 2047” (Defence Blueprint, 2025).

5. Conclusion

Bharat has allocated US\$ 78.7 billion of its budget of 2025-26 on defence sector. More than 595 Industrial Licenses has issued to 366 companies’ operating in Defence sector in Bharat. “This year edition of Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD), which combines both a trade exhibition and an air show, is being held from September 18 till 22. ‘Our products in combat situations have done well and therefore offer a good choice for the African countries. I’m sure, they will go back with good orders’, said High Commissioner Prabhat Kumar after officially opening the Bhartiya Pavilion at AAD on Wednesday. Sanhay Dwivedi, Chairman and managing director of Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVNL), a Government of Bharat enterprise within the Ministry of Defence’, said is the first time that they are participating as an exhibitor. The AVNL has manufactured different types of tank variants, combat vehicles and their variants and different types of mine-protected vehicles and engines used in the tanks since 1962. ‘We know that there is a lot of potential in the African defence market where we can sell our products as well as support makeup and modernization of their vehicles’, Dwivedi said. Stating that he did not see South Africa, also a strong tank developer, as a competitor, Dwivedi said, ‘Today’s world is most one of the competition. Today’s world is one of collaboration and partnership’. Manoj Yadav, General Manager Marketing at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, said his company is showcasing its latest product, an advanced light helicopter. Girish Pradhan, executive director of Bharat Dynamics Limited, said, ‘there was a lot of potential for the combat weapons being supplied to the Bharat armed force to be deployed in South Africa. We also provide end-to-end solutions, not just the delivery of the weapons. We give product support, develop industries and collaborate with them’. Also showcasing their products and seeking business opportunities are Vinkal Bansal, Additional General Manager at Bharat Optel; Kamesh Kasana, General Manager of Military Communication at Bharat Electronics, and Adikesh Vasudevan, General Manager at Goa Shipyard Limited” (ISB, 2025).

Defence exports in Bharat grew by 334% in the last five years and today exports to over 75 countries due to collaborative efforts. Bharat has established two Defence Industrial Corridors in UP and Tamil Nadu and about 194 defence tech startups empower defence sector. Rolls-Royce, TechEagle, JSW Defence, Paras Defence & Space Technologies, Tata Aircraft Complex, DRDO and ISRO launch PSLV propulsion systems, HAL company UAV and other, INDUS-X in artificial intelligence, Bharat-Malaysia, Bharat-Australia, Bharat-Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan, Bharat-Thailand, Bharat-Philippines and Bharat-Jordan have signed defence agreements in various sub-sectors of defence (Defence, 2025). Bharat’s Def Expo 2022 has marked its presence in the global defence industries. Bharat and the world are ready to act on the establishment of Peace & Security in the region and agreed to eradicate the international terrorism from their land. This cooperation in the defence sector will nourish the peaceful environment and work for the cohesive development.

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